

In the claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (canceled).

2. (currently amended) An automated method for designing an integrated circuit layout with a computer, comprising:

(a) selecting a plurality of cells that are intended to be used in the integrated circuit layout;

(b) determining ~~initial~~ delay values ~~for associated with the~~ selected plurality of cells in order to satisfy delay constraints prior to determining an initial placement of the cells; and

(c) performing ~~an initial~~ a placement of the selected plurality of cells after determining said delay values, the placement including assigning loads for the selected plurality of cells and determining a ~~an initial~~ size or area of the selected plurality of cells in response to the said assigned loads and said delay values ~~initial placement~~.

3-4. (canceled).

5. (currently amended) The automated method of claim [[4]] 2 further comprising:
determining [[a]] the size or area of the cells that will approximately maintain the
~~adjusted~~ said delay values determined prior to said placement.

6. (canceled).

7. (previously presented) The automated method of claim 2 further comprising:
routing the digital circuit to generate the integrated circuit layout using a finalized size or area of the selected plurality of cells.

8. (currently amended) The automated method of claim 2 wherein ~~the initial~~ said delay values are determined using gain.

1 9. (currently amended) The automated method of claim 2 wherein ~~the initial~~ said delay
2 values are determined using logical effort.

1 10. (currently amended) The automated method of claim 2 wherein ~~the initial~~ said delay
2 values are determined by finding a preferred gain of the cells.

1 11. (previously presented) The automated method of claim 10 wherein the preferred gain
2 of the cells is determined using a continuous buffering assumption.

1 12. (currently amended) The automated method of claim 2 wherein ~~the initial~~ said delay
2 values are determined during library analysis.

1 13. (currently amended) The automated method of claim 2 wherein ~~the initial~~ said delay
2 values are determined using a typical load of the cells.

1 14. (previously presented) The automated method of claim 13 wherein the typical load is
2 determined based on gain considerations.

1 15. (previously presented) The automated method of claim 2 wherein the size or area of
2 the cells is variable and not fixed at the time the cells are selected.

1 16. (previously presented) An automated method for designing an integrated circuit
2 layout with a computer of a circuit specified by a netlist, comprising:

3 (a) providing a library of cells;

4 (b) determining initial delay values for a plurality of cells from said library of cells to be
5 used in the integrated circuit layout of the circuit before determining an initial size or area of the
6 cells, and using a timing driven covering method to map said plurality of cells to the circuit; and

7 (c) performing an initial placement of the cells, including assigning net lengths to nets on
8 the cells, and determining the initial size or area of the cells in response to the initial placement.

1 17. (previously presented) The automated method of claim 16, including

2 inserting buffers based on an estimation of area savings in the circuit prior to determining
3 said initial size or area of the cells.

1 18. (previously presented) The automated method of claim 16, including
2 compressing or stretching delay values associated with cells prior to determining said
3 initial delay values for the cells.

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